

So Where can I drive/ride?

This is a draft document.

OK! You've bought the 4x4, trail bike or Quad and got the gear

... So where are you going to go?

That piece of moorland where everyone goes off road, even though there are signs saying 'private land – no vehicles'? Or how about that disused railway line, or the local network of footpaths and bridleways? Hold on! If you drive in any of these places and many others you will be breaking the law, possibly causing environmental damage and you could have your car, quad bike or motor bike confiscated by the police. Beware of the bloke who says 'It's OK – everyone does it!' The law on where you can and cannot drive comes down to a few basic principles: You can drive on public roads (only 'Byways Open to All Traffic' have definitive vehicular rights), but all the rules of the road apply – things like road tax, insurance, helmets, MoTs, driving licence, no-entry signs, etc. Bear in mind that Byways and unclassified county roads are public highways even though they may not be tarmaced – driving on them is not strictly-speaking "off-roading". You cannot drive or ride on a public footpath, bridleway, cycle track or restricted byway. The law on this has become very complicated, so the advice has to be 'if in any doubt about it – don't'.

You cannot ride or drive on any land, moorland, forest, commons, country parks, waste ground, derelict railways, etc., unless you have the express permission of the landholder. Motor vehicles include bikes, quads, kid's bikes, buggies, karts etc. are now covered by road traffic law. In public open spaces all vehicles must be road legal.

So – where can you go?

If you aren't lucky enough to own your own land, the answer could lie in finding a commercial motor sports site, an off-road "pay and play" centre, or by joining a reputable club specialising in off-road activities. User organisations such as those listed below can advise members on the use of public rights of way such as byways and unsurfaced roads. Ordnance Survey maps are useful guides, but are not definitive sources of legal public rights of way and other routes when it comes to where you can drive or ride.

If you want to explore by yourself, look up the map legend "Public Rights of Way" on the Explorer maps.

You will of course see footpaths and bridleways which you cannot drive or ride.

You will also see RUPPS (Roads Used as Public Paths) which have just been reclassified as Restricted Byways, these are not vehicular and you should not drive or ride them.

Next you will see BOATS or Byways Open to All Traffic, commonly known as byways. These can be driven provided there is no TRO (Traffic Regulation Order in force). They should be waymarked with red arrows but often these are missing.

Finally you will see ORPAs, "Other Routes with Public Access". These are green dots on 1:25,000 Explorer maps and red dots on 1:50,000 Landranger maps. Responsible user groups believe these are vehicular. However, the legal situation is complicated and as such most Highway Authorities are unable to confirm that they are vehicular. If in doubt avoid them. Best advice remains join a responsible user group!

Another route to finding out where to drive or ride is through specialised motoring publications. You'll find adverts for "pay and play" or practice sites. You can go to these sites to increase your skills, so when calling explain your ability level, ask questions, and make your own judgement on whether you are happy with what's on offer.

Below are some useful web sites that can help you to find out where you can and can't drive:-

www.rideoffroad.co.uk www.trailwise.org.uk www.crag-uk.org

www.trf.org.uk www.glass-uk.org www.laragb.org

So what are the consequences of illegal off-roading?

The noise and damage from illegal off-roading creates public hostility to both motorbikes and 4x4s. Your vehicle can be seized and possibly crushed followed by prosecution.